

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method of delivering a pressurized glass melt to a glass forming apparatus,
2 comprising the step of:
3 a) delivering said glass melt through a molten glass pump, such that an output of
4 said glass melt is transferred to said glass forming apparatus;
5 wherein said molten glass pump comprises:
6 i) a housing having an entrance end for receiving an unpressurized glass
7 melt and a distal output end for outputting a pressurized glass melt;
8 and
9 ii) a rotating hub positioned within said housing, said rotating hub
10 including a centerline recirculation channel that traverses the length
11 of said hub.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
2 b) uptaking a cord portion of said glass melt at said distal output end through said
3 centerline recirculation channel back towards said entrance end.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of transporting and pressurizing said
2 glass melt, wherein a plurality of auger flights extending radially from an external
3 surface of said rotating hub move the molten glass from the inlet end to the distal
4 end of the pump.
- 1 4. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:
2 c) further comprising the step of transporting, pressurizing, and mixing said glass
3 melt, wherein a plurality of auger flights extending radially from an
4 external surface of said rotating hub move the molten glass from the inlet
5 end to the distal end of the pump, include at least one cutout which allow a
6 portion of said glass melt to pass backwards into another flow path thereby
7 mixing said glass melt. .

- 1 5. The method of claim 2, wherein multiple sets of blades radially attached to an external
2 surface of said rotating hub divide a flow of glass melt exiting a first set of
3 adjacent blades as it enters a passageway of a second set of adjacent blades.
- 1 6. The method of claim 2, wherein said molten glass pump further comprises a counter-
2 rotating sleeve having a direction of rotation opposite to that of said rotating hub,
3 said counter-rotating sleeve surrounding said rotating hub and being disposed
4 within said housing with the purpose of eliminating the rotation of the molten glass
5 stream exiting the molten glass pump.
- 1 7. The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of uptaking a peripheral portion of
2 said glass melt at said distal end of said molten glass pump back towards said
3 entrance end through a peripheral recirculation channel lying between said
4 counter-rotating sleeve and said housing.
- 1 8. The method of claim 2, wherein said molten glass pump further comprises:
2
3 iii) a first stage including a plurality of auger flights extending radially from an
4 external surface of a first-half portion of said rotating hub, wherein said
5 auger flights recirculate any poorly homogenized glass that flows off a tip
6 of the auger flights back into a fluid stream of glass; and
7
8 iv) a second stage including multiple sets of blades that are radially attached to an
9 external surface of a second-half portion of said rotating hub, wherein any
10 two adjacent sets of blades are positioned such that a flow of glass melt
exiting a first set of adjacent blades is divided as it enters a passageway of a
second set of adjacent blades.
- 1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein said molten glass pump further comprises a counter-
2 rotating sleeve having a direction of rotation opposite to that of said rotating hub,
3 said counter-rotating sleeve surrounding said rotating hub and being disposed
4 within said housing.
- 1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of uptaking a peripheral portion of
2 said glass melt at said distal end of said molten glass pump through a peripheral

recirculation channel lying between said counter-rotating sleeve and said housing back towards said entrance end.

11. The method of claim 8, wherein said plurality of auger flights comprise at least one cutout that a portion of said glass melt to pass backwards into another flow path thereby mixing said glass melt.

12. A glass manufacturing system comprising:

a) a glass-melting furnace;

b) a fore hearth connected to said furnace;

c) a molten glass pump connected to said fore hearth that pressurizes and homogenizes an unpressurized glass melt into a pressurized glass melt, wherein said molten glass pump comprises:

i) a housing having an entrance end for receiving said unpressurized glass melt and a distal output end for outputting said pressurized glass melt; and

ii) a rotating hub positioned within said housing, said hub comprising a centerline recirculation channel that traverses the length of said hub, wherein said centerline recirculation channel intakes a cord portion of said glass melt at said distal output end and conducts said cord portion through said centerline recirculation channel back towards said entrance end;

d) a delivery tube to deliver said pressurized glass melt from said molten glass pump; and

e) a glass-forming device for receiving said pressurized glass melt from said delivery tube.

13. The glass manufacturing system of claim 12, wherein said rotating hub further comprises a plurality of auger flights extending radially from an external surface of

said rotating hub, wherein said auger flights recirculate any poorly homogenized glass that flows off a tip of the auger flights back into a fluid stream of glass.

14. The glass manufacturing system of claim 13, further comprising a counter-rotating sleeve having a direction of rotation opposite to that of said rotating hub, said counter-rotating sleeve surrounding said rotating hub and being disposed within said housing.

15. The glass manufacturing system of claim 14, further comprising a peripheral recirculation channel lying between said counter-rotating sleeve and said housing, wherein a peripheral portion of said glass melt at said distal end of said molten glass pump is conducted through the peripheral recirculation channel back towards said entrance end.

16. The glass manufacturing system of claim 12, wherein said rotating hub further comprises a plurality of auger flights extending radially from an external surface of said rotating hub, wherein said plurality of auger flights include at least one cutout that allows a portion of said glass melt to pass backwards into another flow path thereby mixing said glass melt.

17. The glass manufacturing system of claim 16, further comprising a counter-rotating sleeve having a direction of rotation opposite to that of said rotating hub, said counter-rotating sleeve surrounding said rotating hub and being disposed within said housing.

18. The glass manufacturing system of claim 17, further comprising a peripheral recirculation channel lying between said counter-rotating sleeve and said housing, wherein a peripheral portion of said glass melt at said distal end of said molten glass pump is conducted through the peripheral recirculation channel back towards said entrance end.

19. The glass manufacturing system of claim 12, wherein said rotating hub further comprises multiple sets of blades radially attached to an external surface of said rotating hub, wherein any two adjacent sets of blades are positioned such that a

flow of glass melt exiting a first set of adjacent blades is divided as it enters a passageway of a second set of adjacent blades.

20. The glass manufacturing system of claim 19, further comprising a counter-rotating sleeve having a direction of rotation opposite to that of said rotating hub, said counter-rotating sleeve surrounding said rotating hub and being disposed within said housing.

21. The glass manufacturing system of claim 20, further comprising a peripheral recirculation channel lying between said counter-rotating sleeve and said housing, wherein a peripheral portion of said glass melt at said distal end of said molten glass pump is conducted through the peripheral recirculation channel back towards said entrance end.

22. The glass manufacturing system of claim 19, wherein said blades are pitched in one direction.

23. The glass manufacturing system of claim 19, wherein said blades have different lengths.

24. The glass manufacturing system of claim 19, wherein said blades are arranged in a helical pattern around said rotating hub.

25. The glass manufacturing system of claim 19, wherein said blades of a first set of adjacent blades overlap with that of a second set of adjacent blades.

26. The glass manufacturing system of claim 19, wherein said blades are pitched in two directions and at varying pitches..

27. The glass manufacturing system of claim 19, wherein said blades are arranged with varied spacing between said blades.

28. The glass manufacturing system of claim 12, further comprising a counter-rotating sleeve having a direction of rotation opposite to that of said rotating hub, said counter-rotating sleeve surrounding said rotating hub and being disposed within said housing.

1 29. The glass manufacturing system of claim 28, further comprising a peripheral
2 recirculation channel lying between said counter-rotating sleeve and said housing,
3 wherein a peripheral portion of said glass melt at said distal end of said molten
4 glass pump is conducted through the peripheral recirculation channel back towards
5 said entrance end.

1 28. The glass manufacturing system of claim 12, wherein said molten glass pump further
2 comprises:

3 a) a first stage including a plurality of auger flights extending radially from an
4 external surface of a first-half portion of said rotating hub, wherein said
5 auger flights recirculate any poorly homogenized glass that flows off a tip
6 of the auger flights back into a fluid stream of glass; and

7 b) a second stage including multiple sets of blades that are radially attached to an
8 external surface of a second-half portion of said rotating hub, wherein any
9 two adjacent sets of blades are positioned such that a flow of glass melt
10 exiting a first set of adjacent blades is divided as it enters a passageway of a
11 second set of adjacent blades.

1 29. The glass manufacturing system of claim 12, further comprising a counter-rotating
2 sleeve having a direction of rotation opposite to that of said rotating hub, said
3 counter-rotating sleeve surrounding said rotating hub and being disposed within
4 said housing.

1 30. The glass manufacturing system of claim 29, further comprising a peripheral
2 recirculation channel lying between said counter-rotating sleeve and said housing,
3 wherein a peripheral portion of said glass melt at said distal end of said molten
4 glass pump is conducted through the peripheral recirculation channel back towards
5 said entrance end.

1 31. The glass manufacturing system of claim 28, wherein said plurality of auger flights
2 comprise at least one cutout that allows a portion of said glass melt to pass
3 backwards into another flow path thereby mixing said glass melt.

32. A molten glass pump for pressurizing and homogenizing a glass melt, comprising:

a) a housing having an entrance end for receiving an unpressurized glass melt and a distal output end for outputting a pressurized glass melt; and

b) a rotating hub positioned within said housing, said hub comprising a centerline recirculation channel that traverses the length of said hub, wherein said centerline recirculation channel intakes a cord portion of said glass melt at said distal output end and conducts said cord portion through said centerline recirculation channel back towards said entrance end.

33. The molten glass pump of claim 32, wherein said rotating hub further comprises a plurality of auger flights extending radially from an external surface of said rotating hub, wherein said auger flights recirculate any poorly homogenized glass that flows off a tip of the auger flights back into a fluid stream of glass.

34. The molten glass pump of claim 33, further comprising a counter-rotating sleeve having a direction of rotation opposite to that of said rotating hub, said counter-rotating sleeve surrounding said rotating hub and being disposed within said housing.

35. The molten glass pump of claim 34, further comprising a peripheral recirculation channel lying between said counter-rotating sleeve and said housing, wherein a peripheral portion of said glass melt at said distal end of said molten glass pump is conducted through the peripheral recirculation channel back towards said entrance end.

36. The molten glass pump of claim 32, wherein said rotating hub further comprises a plurality of auger flights extending radially from an external surface of said rotating hub, said plurality of auger flights including at least one cutout that allows a portion of said glass melt to pass backwards into another flow path thereby mixing said glass melt.

37. The molten glass pump of claim 36, further comprising a counter-rotating sleeve having a direction of rotation opposite to that of said rotating hub, said counter-

rotating sleeve surrounding said rotating hub and being disposed within said housing.

38. The molten glass pump of claim 37, further comprising a peripheral recirculation channel lying between said counter-rotating sleeve and said housing, wherein a peripheral portion of said glass melt at said distal end of said molten glass pump is conducted through the peripheral recirculation channel back towards said entrance end.

39. The molten glass pump of claim 32, wherein said rotating hub further comprises multiple sets of blades radially attached to an external surface of said rotating hub, wherein any two adjacent sets of blades are positioned such that a flow of glass melt exiting a first set of adjacent blades is divided as it enters a passageway of a second set of adjacent blades.

40. The molten glass pump of claim 39, further comprising a counter-rotating sleeve having a direction of rotation opposite to that of said rotating hub, said counter-rotating sleeve surrounding said rotating hub and being disposed within said housing.

41. The molten glass pump of claim 40, further comprising a peripheral recirculation channel lying between said counter-rotating sleeve and said housing, wherein a peripheral portion of said glass melt at said distal end of said molten glass pump is conducted through the peripheral recirculation channel back towards said entrance end.

42. The molten glass pump of claim 39, wherein said blades are pitched in one direction.

43. The molten glass pump of claim 39, wherein said blades have different lengths.

44. The molten glass pump of claim 39, wherein said blades are arranged in a helical pattern around said rotating hub.

45. The molten glass pump of claim 39, wherein said blades of a first set of adjacent blades overlap with that of a second set of adjacent blades.

46. The molten glass pump of claim 39, wherein said blades are pitched in two directions and at varying pitches..

47. The molten glass pump of claim 39, wherein said blades are arranged with varied spacing between said blades.

48. The molten glass pump of claim 32, wherein said rotating hub further comprises:

a) a first stage including a plurality of auger flights extending radially from an external surface of a first-half portion of said rotating hub, wherein said auger flights recirculate any poorly homogenized glass that flows off a tip of the auger flights back into a fluid stream of glass; and

b) a second stage including multiple sets of blades that are radially attached to an external surface of a second-half portion of said rotating hub, wherein any two adjacent sets of blades are positioned such that a flow of glass melt exiting a first set of adjacent blades is divided as it enters a passageway of a second set of adjacent blades.

49. The molten glass pump of claim 32, further comprising a counter-rotating sleeve having a direction of rotation opposite to that of said rotating hub, said counter-rotating sleeve surrounding said rotating hub and being disposed within said housing.

50. The molten glass pump of claim 49, further comprising a peripheral recirculation channel lying between said counter-rotating sleeve and said housing, wherein a peripheral portion of said glass melt at said distal end of said molten glass pump is conducted through the peripheral recirculation channel back towards said entrance end.

51. The molten glass pump of claim 48, wherein said plurality of auger flights comprise at least one cutout that allows a portion of said glass melt to pass backwards into another flow path thereby mixing said glass melt.